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THE

METHOD OF MEDITATION.

BY THE

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INTRODUCTION.

1. *Necessity of Prayer.*

Prayer—for this must first be laid down—belongs to the science of the Saints, of which it forms no small part; and this science of the Saints is constituted much less of human precepts and doctrine, than of the unction of the Holy Ghost, and the desires of a good will. Hence this admonition must first be given: Whoever really desires to meditate with fruit, must earnestly beg this very grace, “Lord, teach us to pray . . . meditate.” “The unction of the Holy Ghost teaches us all things.” “He asketh for us with unspeakable groanings.”* Now if no one can say: “Lord Jesus,” except in the Holy

* Domine, doce nos orare doce meditari.—Luke xi. 1.

Spiritus Sancti unctio docet nos de omnibus.—1 John ii 27.

Ille postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus.—Rom. viii. 26.

Ghost,* who shall be able to spend a whole hour with ardent affection and with profit in the meditation of divine things, unless prompted and assisted by the same Holy Spirit? To meditate properly then, the first step must be to beg of God with ardor the grace, the science of meditating.

2. springing from an ardent desire,

With ardor, I say, inasmuch as it is a most precious gift of such extreme necessity to us, that it may in truth be said : to a Jesuit to be able to meditate, and meditate with fruit, is of as great value as that most precious gift, vocation and perseverance in his vocation. Now if a poor man would learn with great alacrity a trade by plying which he might unquestionably hope to get rich, with what desires ought we not to seek, with what zeal practise that art, by which we are to ward off not the poverty and misery of the body indeed, but the more grievous ones of the soul ?

3. united with zeal and effort on our part.

Let us then with prayer combine serious efforts on our part; for we must not expect God to work miracles for us, or infuse into

* 1 Cor. xii. 3.

us the gift of meditating, without our employing any means to that end.

This much then premised, and supposing a real desire of advancing in virtue, without which all of course falls to the ground, I will now briefly touch upon what depends on us towards obtaining with the assistance of God's grace the gift of meditation.

Some things are to be observed before meditation, some in the course of the meditation itself, and some after it. What is to be observed beforehand, is comprised under the head of *preparation*, of which we accordingly treat first.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS TO BE OBSERVED BEFORE MEDITATION.

Twofold Preparation.

Preparation is usually divided into remote and immediate. Of the remote preparation we have already said something: for that true and sincere desire of advancing, absolutely necessary, as we intimated, to him who desires to meditate with fruit, is itself alone a most excellent preparation for meditation. However, to explain the matter more clearly, something still more precise needs to be said of this remote preparation.

1. *Remote, which removes obstacles : viz.*

Remote preparation for meditation then is nothing else but such a state of mind as disposes it to meditate rightly, that is, by removing obstacles and furnishing aids. What the obstacles are, we know full well.

Pride,

Pride and vain self-esteem are an obstacle to meditation. "The communication of

the Lord is with the simple," and humble. "God regardeth the humble, and looketh upon the proud from afar."*

Hypocrisy,

Another obstacle is hypocrisy and a desire of feigning to be what we really are not. "The holy spirit of discipline will flee the deceitful.†

Any sin,

All sins to which the soul clings, are obstacles: "For that heavenly wisdom will not enter a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins."‡ As the stain of the body is particularly mentioned in this portion of Holy Writ, it is clearly intimated that sins and defects against the angelic virtue, offer the greatest obstacle to the graces of the Holy Ghost.

or Dissipation of Mind,

Dissipation of mind and a careless guard

* Cum simplicibus sermocinatio Domini.—Prov. iii. 37.

Dominus humilia respicit et alta a longe cognoscit.—Ps. cxxxvii. 6.

† Spiritus enim disciplinæ sanctus effugiet fictum.—Wisd. i. 5.

‡ Quoniam in malevolam animam non introibit sapientia nec habitabit in corpore subdito peccatis.—Id. i. 4.

over the senses during the day, are also a great hindrance : for it is impossible for one whose imagination is full of trifles, to meditate well and devoutly, or keep his mind collected in prayer, when out of that holy exercise it is always dissipated, not by just reason of his employment, but through his curiosity, immodesty, and other vices.

These, therefore, and such like obstacles, must be seriously removed by him who desires to meditate with fruit.

and supplies General Aids, that is, the opposite virtues, viz :

But aids are to be supplied, and these are nothing, we may say, but the exercise of the virtues opposed to the obstacles which we have named, humility, simplicity in action, watchfulness over the senses, &c. For these give rest to the soul and thus fit it for meditation, and at the same time draw down divine graces. “Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.”* It is upon them that God is wont to make his countenance shine in prayer.

Mortification.

Nor is mortification to be omitted here,

* Beati mundi corde quoniam ipsi Deum vident.—Matt.

being, as it were, the price at which we purchase of the Almighty the gift of meditation. For we see it almost always happen, that they who practise greater mortification, have a greater relish for prayer, and *vice versa*. God indeed gives freely what he sees us desire so ardently as to seem willing to purchase it with our very blood and at any sacrifice. This disposition of mind, though here set down as a remote preparation for prayer, seems, I admit, to suppose fruit already gained by prayer; but nevertheless this disposition has various degrees: and whoever meditates, ought surely to have some beginning of them all. This sincere desire of advancing, ought surely to be in all, even the youngest novices, since this and none other ought to be the end for which we came to the society.

2. *Immediate, from the Additions of our Holy Father.*

And now with regard to the immediate preparation, this is for the most part embraced in this teaching of our holy Father Ignatius.

The day before—

To read attentively or hear read over night the matter of the morning meditation, observing what fruit of meditating, accord-

ing to the state of one's soul, is to be derived from such meditation.

Before Sleep—

After lying down in bed, before going to sleep, to call the same matter to mind briefly.

In the Morning.

On awaking in the morning, to give the first thought to the approaching meditation.

(*Note 3.—First Week.*)

Finally, to come to the meditation itself with a settled mind, and immediately before beginning, "to consider with the mind lifted up for the short period in which a *Pater noster* may be said (such are our holy Father's words), the Lord Jesus as present, and regarding what he is about to do." To think in whose presence he stands, to whom he is about to speak, and then, *before falling on his knees*, to represent by a lively faith, God present, searchingly reading all his thoughts. Before falling on his knees, I remark, because this lively idea of the presence of God ought to be conceived not after the preparatory prayer, as it were by way of prelude, but before it, as before all prayer. I have noted this more earnestly here, because it

seems to be frequently neglected by many, who forsooth suddenly, and as it were hurriedly throw themselves on their knees, without a thought as to what they are going to do.

Of such great moment are these points, each and all, that whoso keeps them all, may reasonably rest assured that he will progress greatly; who keeps but few, advance but little, who keeps none, make no advance. "Before prayer, prepare thy soul, and be not like a man tempting God."*

This much our Father Saint Ignatius prescribes to be done before meditation, and he himself, though endowed with a wonderful habit of prayer, and enriched with the sublime gift of contemplation, yet never omitted them. Far more then does it become us, who are so little skilled in this exercise, and, on the other hand, are so apt to allow our mind to be diverted and wander from meditation, to employ in good earnest this preparation in all its parts. Hence also it is apparent, to give this warning by the way, why it is usual to inculcate so deeply on us the observance

* Ante orationem præpara animam tuam et noli esse quasi homo qui tentat Deum.—Ecclus. xviii. 23

of strict silence and severe modesty, especially in the evening before sleep, and in the morning before meditation ; since truly every defect in these points, committed at these times, has great influence on the meditation, and may greatly hinder it, as well by reason of the dissipation into which the mind plunges by this kind of imperfections, as by reason of the withdrawal of divine grace in punishment of such unfaithfulness.

In visiting the Blessed Sacrament.

Another immediate preparation is during the morning visit to the Blessed Sacrament, to recommend to our Lord then present, the meditation we are soon to make, and to implore the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and our other holy patrons for that hour.

CHAPTER II.

THINGS TO BE OBSERVED IN THE MEDITATION ITSELF.

The Meditation itself has three parts or seasons : viz.

The meditation itself has three parts or seasons, beginning, middle, and end, or ingress, progress, and egress : of each of which something is to be said.

I. Beginning or Ingress, which is made,

By beginning or ingress is understood all those things that precede the matter itself, or points of meditating in mental prayer. They are as follows :

1st. By Adoration.

1. Humbly adore God by falling on the knees, unless prevented by some bodily ailment, in which case, care should be taken to compensate by greater inward reverence. This is the meditator's first act, and to be made with the interior affection of the heart, ought to be preceded by the consideration noted in the immediate pre-

paration—"What am I about to do, and before what Lord do I stand?"

With lively faith, therefore, as though he beheld heaven open above him, and God in boundless majesty surrounded there by countless bands of holy men and angels, and with his whole heavenly court keeping his divine eyes fixed upon him to see what he is about to do, and how he is about to pray,—with this lively faith, I say, let him fall upon his knees, and with all possible devotion, recite the usual preparatory prayer.

2d. By a Preparatory Prayer.

2. The preparatory prayer customary before every meditation usually comprises, the act of adoration, an acknowledgment of the Divine Majesty, and our own nothingness, with grief and deprecation for sins, which ought in justice to precede all prayer, and then the offering of one's self and all one's powers to meditate, and a petition for divine aid to pray well. Care must be taken to elicit these acts not so much from the lips as from the heart.

This prayer should never be omitted, even when a person hindered by some unforeseen accident, comes late to meditation.

3d. *By Preludes.*

3. Let him make what our holy Father calls preludes, of which two at least should be employed.

First Prelude in sensible things.

The first prelude is intended to aid the imagination after some sort, and to prevent the mind from wandering too easily. It is styled by our holy Father, "construction of the place," because the one meditating places as it were before his eyes the very matter on which he is about to meditate. For example, if he is going to meditate on Christ crucified, let him suppose himself to stand on Mount Calvary, and there behold Jesus Christ nailed to the cross between two thieves, covered with wounds, the blood streaming from every pore: his Blessed Mother with John, Magdalen, and a few other pious women standing beneath the cross. Almost all the rest of the countless multitude, mockers, blasphemers, &c.

If on the Nativity of our Lord, let him set the event before his eyes as it is usually painted—that is to say, a deserted stable, open to all the winds of heaven; the manger in one corner, where the Divine Infant lies wrapped in swaddling clothes, and weeping; the Blessed Virgin and Saint

Joseph standing by, and if the meditation requires it, some shepherds, &c.

In these and similar matters, the *Construction of the place*, if well made, is really of great service, as it fixes the imagination on a definite object, and prevents it from easily wandering : but should it happen to do so in the course of the meditation, recourse must be had at once to the representation formed in the prelude, after the manner of those who wish to inspect a thing accurately. If diverted by any accident or noise, these at any time turn their eyes to some other object, they no sooner collect their thoughts, than they return to the matter which they had undertaken to examine.

N. B.—It must, however, be carefully observed here, that in such matter the meditator must not set the matter before him as a painting, nor as transacted long ages ago : but just as though he beheld it going on before him, and as if he were present in the stable of Bethlehem, on Mount Calvary, seeing with his own eyes, hearing with his own ears, and as though the mystery was then actually accomplishing.

2d. In Incorporeal Matters.

But if the subject of the meditation cannot properly be seen by the eyes; for instance, sin or virtue, or any other incorporeal thing, this prelude is not generally so serviceable, unless the person has a very lively imagination. Yet some *Construction of the place* can be made. If, for example, we are about to meditate on sin, we may, as Saint Ignatius says, behold in imagination our soul shut up in this body, as in a prison, and man himself an exile, as it were, among brute beasts; or, for example, to propose sin to ourselves under the form of some most gloomy and horrible monster; or its effects, as the fire of hell prepared for the sinner, man under the power of Satan, bound in fetters and on the very point of being hurled into that abyss of torments, &c.

Thus different other images may be employed, according to the matter; but this imagery or prelude must be settled upon the preceding evening, while preparing the meditation. A variety of images should not be chosen, nor should much labor be spent in seeking or forming them. Should nothing easily suggest itself, the first prelude should be confined to simply remembering the subject of the meditation.

3d. In Meditating on some Sentence.

Lastly, if the matter of meditation is a sentence of Christ our Lord, the first prelude will be to place one's self among the disciples or other hearers of Christ, and to receive that very sentence as it fell from the lips of the Divine Master. If any other words of Holy Scripture are to be meditated, the person meditating should in the first prelude hear them, as it were, from the lips of the sacred penman who gives them, or as if fallen from heaven to him and especially directed to him, and so in other cases.

II. Prelude, a Petition of a two-fold Special Grace.

The second prelude is simply a petition for grace, but not in general for grace to meditate well (for that is sought in the preparatory prayer), but in particular to obtain the fruit proposed in the meditation. Two things are almost always to be sought, the enlightenment of the understanding and the moving of the will, so as both to know and to will. If, for example, it is to be a meditation on sin, let us ask grace whereby we may both know how great an evil sin is, and may detect and abhor it with a serious will.

A form of petition to the three Divine

Persons to be used in this second prelude, is found in many books, arranged so as to add in each meditation what is suited to it alone.

In Historical Subjects, three preludes.

In meditating on any historical subject, our holy Father prescribes that before the two preludes just explained, the whole series of events comprised in the point to be meditated, should first be recalled to mind, after which the construction of the place should be made, and a petition for grace offered ; thus making three preludes.

All this ingress of meditation, the adoration, preparatory prayer, and preludes, should not, ordinarily speaking, take up more than four or five minutes at most.

§ II. OF THE MIDDLE OR PROGRESS.

Progress is made by the application of the three powers.

The middle or progress embraces the very body of the meditation, that is to say, the points of which two, three, or even more should be prepared. Meditation itself consists, properly speaking, in weighing and ruminating these points, and seeking spiritual food in them. I say nothing here of the division of points, inasmuch as points are always proposed, or are set forth in the

book or manuscript. But how the matter of meditation is to be developed, how the mind is to be occupied concerning the truths proposed in the points of meditation, and is to be kept to them, how fruit is to be sought and gathered from each point, how the matter is to be applied to the present state of the soul; of these indeed there is something to say in this place.

Now according to the idea and teachings of our holy Father Ignatius, meditation consists in the application of the three powers, to wit: of the memory, understanding, and will. The meditation is well made if these faculties are rightly applied. And all three are to be applied to each point, and even one point may afford sufficient matter for the meditation.

1st. HOW THE MEMORY IS TO BE EXERCISED.

Memory, how to be applied,

First then, memory recalls to itself anew the matter proposed for meditation; this to be made in nearly the same way as in the first prelude, with this difference, however. 1st. That not the whole matter as in the prelude, but only that part set out in the point, is now to be recalled. 2nd. That this representation is to be made much more accurately and

generally at greater length than in the prelude; for example, if a sentence is proposed for meditation.

in a Sentence,

In the prelude we merely propose it to ourselves, as if we heard that sentence from the lips of Our Lord, or spoken from heaven to us. But now in meditation, the memory is to be applied in such a manner that I both hear the sentence spoken to me and attentively ask myself: *Who is he who says this? What does he say?* weighing well the meaning of each word. Thus in fine, this first application of the memory will prepare the way for the reflections which the understanding will presently have to make.

in a Fact.

In like manner if the matter of the meditation be some fact; I must recal to memory not the whole of it as in the prelude, but the one part of it to be handled in this point; nor merely recal it but also attentively consider the circumstances contained in that part, propose it to myself, put to myself the questions: *Who? what? where? by what assistance? why? how? when? &c.* For these questions are to be settled in this place as the

application of the understanding ought to reason to collect practical fruit from circumstances of this kind, previously well weighed.

Examples.

I subjoin an example of each class, to wit, a sentence and a fact.

1. *In Meditating on a Sentence,*

Let the matter of meditation be this sentence of Our Lord Jesus : "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Quid prodest homini si mundum universum lucretur, animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur?"

1st Prelude.

First Prelude. I will set before my eyes my Lord surrounded by the body of his disciples and place myself among them, as if I heard the Lord saying to me, "What doth it profit," &c.

Memory.

But the memory shall be applied thus.

Who ?

Christ Jesus, therefore . . . who is eternal wisdom and eternal truth . . . sent from heaven as a master of salvation . . . who

wishes to give me no vain terror or anxiety, but to save me. . . .

What doth he say?

This Jesus therefore saith . . what doth it profit that is, it profiteth (a man) nothing . . any man whatsoever . . to gain the whole world . . . even if he alone should become possessed of the whole world and all its riches . . honors . . . pleasures even if he alone were possessed of all these if he lose, . . lose by sin to eternal damnation his own soul immortal and eternal soul. So it is, so saith Jesus Christ. . . .

Believest thou?

I believe because he is eternal, infallible truth all the goods of this world, all its glory, . . . do not profit will not profit a man all its delights will not profit a man if he lose his own soul. So saith Jesus Christ, and surely it is so.

Why too it is so.

For the whole world passeth away, but my soul doth not pass away the soul remaineth for ever to be happy or miserable for an Eternity. The world passes and all its glory and all its enjoyments and all its

riches all these pass away
 a day will come to put an end to all
 these things: and surely then it will
 profit nothing to have enjoyed them for a
 time since then they shall last no
 longer what if a man should enjoy
 the most prosperous fortune in the world
 for 10 . . . 30 40 years.
 Rare is such fortune! it happens to
 a scanty few. And still even if it
 should befall any man what will it
 profit him if he lose his soul ? All
 these years shall pass away all will
 come to an end . . . but the soul shall exist
 for ever either salvation awaits it
 or damnation but to this happi-
 ness or unhappiness of the soul never
 . . . never shall there come an end.
 Therefore in truth . . . what doth it
 profit a man if he gain the whole world, but
 lose his own soul?"

[I confess indeed, that what is last said
 (inquiring some reason for the saying) may
 seem to belong rather to the exercise of
 the understanding. But it matters little.
 It is placed here so that to the understand-
 ing may be left only the general explana-
 tion of the truth, adapted to each one and
 his state. Nothing surely prevents the
 application of the memory being to a cer-

tain degree interwoven with that of the understanding, nay more the will too may here employ itself in some affections.]

2. *Example of Meditation on a fact.*

The following is an example of the application of the memory in a fact. I shall here set down the prelude that the difference between them may be seen.

Suppose Christ crucified to be the subject of meditation.

First point. *What the Lord suffers in his body.* Second point. *What he suffers in honor.* Third point. *What he suffers in soul.* Here it is evident the prelude shall briefly comprise the whole matter, while on the other hand the application of the memory is limited to that point which is to be meditated. Therefore,

1st *Prelude.*

First prelude. "I shall place myself as if present on Mount Calvary, and set before my eyes Christ our Lord, hanging on the cross, still alive, in the centre between two thieves, the blood flowing copiously. I shall see also that host of unnumbered people, almost all mocking and blaspheming our Lord. I shall behold their furious looks, and hear their

mutterings and shouts. Amid all this Jesus in his agony cries out, *My God! my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" This prelude, it is clear, contains all three points compendiously.

Memory.

But now in applying the memory one only must be taken, omitting what does not belong to that point.

What?

First point. *What our Lord suffers in body.* "Our Lord hangs on the cross Oh! what pains he suffers, what atrocious torments! His whole body covered with wounds and drenched in blood. Vere non est ei species neque decor a planta pedis usque ad verticem capitis non est in eo sanitas. Truly there is no beauty or comeliness in him from the soles of his foot to the top of his head there is no soundness in him." All his limbs . . . alas! how cruelly are they tortured. His head pierced with thorns, the points have pierced his forehead . . . they encircle his whole head . . . His eyes suffused with blood . . . his whole face bruised and livid . . . His mouth tormented with gall, . . . his breast, back, arms, sides, legs, lacerated in a fearful man-

ner in many places the flesh torn off, the naked bones are seen his hands and feet pierced with nails with awful pain and by limbs thus awfully wounded the torn and bruised nerves, he hangs one, two, three long hours alive. What fearful torture !

Who ?

Such great suffering does Jesus Christ endure Jesus the innocent, holy, stainless, the good nay innocence, sanctity, goodness itself God and man Savior of the human race worthy of infinite love ! He who is the joy of the angels, and upon whom the heavenly spirits long to gaze *He* is treated thus by man.

By whom ? why ?

His eternal Father so permitting and disposing ! . . . But why this ? Not surely for his own sin for none hath he who never sinned nor could sin but for the sins of the whole human race for mine . . . for mine, even for such and such sins such great things doth Jesus suffer ! and although so great and he innocent he suffers them

How ?

In silence notwithstanding, without complaint, and not only without hatred towards those, who are the cause and authors of such tortures inflicted on him, but with extreme love for them All these things are really so ; so divine faith teaches ; so do I believe ; I believe without doubting, because faith so teaches, supported by revelation and the word of God, who is truth infallible and eternal.

This application of the memory to be made accurately,

The memory is to be applied in about this manner. And as to the application of it, it is needless to delay longer, since generally what concerns the memory is set forth in books of meditation, although always to be extended by the meditator and accurately ruminated ; not passingly ; for this application of the memory is a kind of foundation, upon which are erected the reflections and other affections of meditation ; or as it were the seed and root from which the reflections and affections must necessarily spring. But unless this application of the memory is made with attention, many salutary reflections also will be lost.

Adding generally an act of Faith.

Here we may with good reason make an observation as to a thing everywhere spoken of with praise, namely, that whenever it can be done, an act of faith concerning the truth or history proposed, should be elicited during this application of the memory. For in this way, the reflections which follow, become more solid and will have greater power to move the will. I have therefore, in both the examples now given, added or inserted, an act of faith.

#II. HOW THE UNDERSTANDING IS TO BE APPLIED.

After the matter to be meditated has been laid before the mind by the memory, in the way we have said, acts of the understanding are to follow ; the use of which faculty is evidently to make various reflections on those truths, which the memory, has proposed ; to apply them to ourselves and our wants ; thence to draw practical conclusions ; to weigh the motives for them ; and consider how we have acted hitherto with regard to these truths, or how we ought to act for the future. All this the understanding will furnish, nor is great learning needed for this ; and one

however simple and unlearned, can without difficulty reason with himself, concerning all these things with the help of divine grace. For here no extraordinary conceptions or learned comments are needed, but merely practical applications, and simple discourses. The course uniformly advised and indeed most proper, and suited to the reach of even the ignorant, is to run over, and put to one's-self some simple questions, which any one can answer with ease, provided he be willing to apply his mind seriously.

What questions are to be put to one's-self,

The questions to be put to one's-self, are chiefly the following. What must I consider of this? (which is proposed for meditation, or which I have revealed in my memory). What practical conclusion is to be drawn from it? What motives lead me to keep it? How have I observed this doctrine hitherto? What shall I do for the future? What impediment is to be removed? What means to be chosen?

Of each of these questions or reflections, we shall say a few words.

I. *What must I consider of this?*

At this question, one particular truth

contained in that point, is to be insisted on. Not unfrequently one and the same point offers not one, but many truths. The person meditating will therefore take first one of these truths, then another, and so on, if there are more, each in turn, discussing them and applying them to himself. So, for instance, in the sentence we propose above—What doth it profit a man, &c., two considerations at least present themselves, to wit: 1st, That to gain the whole world, is a vain and not a solid good; 2d, that the loss or gain of the soul is of the highest moment, on which all men's happiness or unhappiness depends. In like manner in that point on the sufferings of Christ crucified, there are many things to be pondered and applied, as many certainly as there were questions in the application of the memory, viz. *What? Who? Why? How? &c.* For each contains different reflections which the Meditator may with fruit make and apply to himself. Taking, therefore, the first of these reflections, he shall put to himself on it the remaining questions—*What practical conclusion is to be drawn from it? &c.* He shall afterwards do the same in the second reflection, then in the third, and so on.

II. What practical conclusion is to be drawn from it.

Here the Meditator regards what he ought to do since the matter he considers stands so? How ought he to regulate his morals according to this truth? for example, from that sentence, *What doth it profit a man*, the first reflection was, that "To gain the whole world, is vain and no solid good." If now I ask what practical conclusion is to be drawn from this? Every one will surely find an easy answer, viz. "Therefore, the whole world is to be despised, with all its riches, honors, and delights, since indeed it will avail a man nothing to have gained the whole world with all these things. Therefore, not even to gain the whole world, nor all its wealth, its honors and delights, ought I to suffer any injury to my soul. And much less, for any little temporal good, for any vain glory or love of human praise, for any sensual delight, ought I to offend God and put my soul in jeopardy."

Two things to be observed.

Now in this place he must observe this advice, which is of extreme moment; that each one meditating, should here draw for himself a conclusion suited to his state.

1st. *The conclusion must not be general, but particular.*

For in the first place, a general conclusion is, for the most part, productive of no effect. As if a person, from the example given, should only deduce this conclusion: "Therefore the whole world is to be despised," but not descend to particulars. Conclusions like this are not inaptly compared to discharges of artillery aimed at no certain point, which do no harm to the enemy, nor batter down the walls. So, also, general conclusions without application to particulars do not crush the enemies of the soul, bring the passions to order, or level the opposing walls of difficulty, but in truth, so to speak, beat the air.

2d. *Suited to the Meditator's state.*

Next, it is not enough to come to particulars, but each one must insist on that particular conclusion which suits him, and apply the practical truth to that which is the cause of his sins or defects, or hinders him in God's service; for instance, in the example before us, the general conclusion:

"Therefore, the whole world is to be despised; therefore, not even for the whole world is aught to be done which can harm

my soul ; therefore rather than expose the soul to danger, the loss of the whole world ought to be borne." This general conclusion, I say, must be differently applied to each one's state and necessity.

1st Example.

Whoever is tormented by the desire of vain-glory ought to conclude thus. " If the whole world is to be despised, how much more ought I to despise this vile vain-glory, which corrupts all my works and inflicts grievous injury on my soul ; if I had all the glory of the world, if I were praised and highly extolled by all men, it would avail me nothing ; how much less will it avail me if one or two, if the few with whom I dwell, praise me, make much of me, &c." And here also he must descend to those actions of his, which vain-glory most frequently corrupts, to those sins and defects which he commits through a desire of vain-glory, whether for instance, influenced by it he ever feigns, conceals his defects, excuses them, even misrepresents them by little lying pretexts, &c. To these things especially ought he to apply that truth—" *What doth it profit ?*"

2nd Example.

He, however, who is afflicted by sensuality or gluttony, who often falls by seeking his own ease, must thus reason with himself: "If not even the whole world is worth so much, that any one for it should suffer any harm to his soul, and if sin is not to be committed for the whole world with all its pleasures; surely much less are the rules to be violated, and harm done my soul for this or that comfort, for some morsel which passes the palate in a moment; and if it would avail me nothing to enjoy all the delights of this world; how much less will it avail to indulge one's-self in so mean a pleasure; and if the whole world and all its delights are to be despised, how much more this wretched satisfaction of gluttony and sensuality, &c." Here also descending to those cases in particular, where through sensuality, gluttony, &c., it more frequently befalls him to commit sins and defects.

3rd Example.

He who finds any difficulty in the religious life—to whom anything seems too heavy, too repugnant, too vexatious, so that perhaps even the religious state on that account seems loathsome, &c., ought

to apply this truth to himself thus : "The loss of the whole world is rather to be sustained, according to this sentence of Jesus Christ, than the soul exposed to danger ; how much more is this, and this difficulty to be borne cheerfully by me, rather than lose the most precious gift of my vocation, and my assurance of eternal beatitude ? For what will it avail me to have shunned this or that trouble, to have avoided this cross, to have escaped this thing which displeases my nature ; if I receive any hurt to my soul, if I lose my vocation, my salvation, and afterwards for a whole eternity be doomed to bear the most dreadful, &c." Descending in like manner to those difficulties in particular which occur most frequently, which most frequently disturb him, and move his displeasure. Thus indeed each must apply to himself, one and the same truth, differently according to the several necessity of each : and from one and the same general conclusion, draw particular conclusions adapted to his state. Moreover this advice is of so great importance that it may be boldly declared, that on the observance or neglect of this chiefly depends the fruit of meditation.

III. WHAT MOTIVES LEAD TO KEEP THIS CONCLUSION.

Various motives,

Here are we to consider and ruminate on the motives or incitements to do that which by meditation we know ought to be done, that the purposes of a better life may be more solid. Our will follows the understanding. If the understanding does not admit the motives for a thing, the will is little inclined to it. And now the motives or incitements to fly vice, to follow virtue, to overcome difficulty and troubles, are *becoming, useful, pleasing, necessary*, and others, if any there be, which move or incite the mind to anything. All, or certainly some of them, must be applied to the matter which we meditate on, to the practical conclusion which we deduce.

Becoming,

Becoming signifies that the thing is decent and proper. Here let the meditator think what it becomes a man, endowed with reason, to do, what it becomes a Christian, a religious, a companion of Jesus to do. Here he shall find most ample and strong motives. We ought daily—nay constantly to keep before us, this title of Companion of Jesus (*Jesu Socius*), which

title alone has immense weight to move us. For what vice, what slight fault even doth it not become him to fly who wishes to be called, and to be a companion of Jesus? What virtue, nay what perfection and sanctity doth it not become him to strive for, who wishes to be a companion of Jesus, of Jesus the example of all virtue and sanctity? And what difficulty, what trouble, nay even what affliction, how great soever, what torments, what contempt doth it not become him to overcome and bear nobly who is a companion of Jesus, and him crucified? Truly this title of companion of Jesus, even alone, when duly weighed, may be enough to convince the soul, and most powerfully urges it on by the assistance of God's grace. This title will always afford a most plenteous source of pious thoughts and affections of humility, and a desire of aspiring to better things.

Useful,

Useful embraces the spiritual advantages which the observance of this practical doctrine may bring. Spiritual advantages, I say, which regard the good of the soul and eternity, for all others are not supernatural, and therefore vain motives.

N. B. Therefore here must not be pon-

dered such advantages as, I shall avoid penances, I shall satisfy my superiors, I shall please my brethren, and such like ; for as such motives are both vicious in themselves and conducive either to vice or virtue, they will surely form hypocrites, rather than men desirous of true virtue. Sometimes perhaps one of these motives may be added to other supernatural motives, but this must always be sparingly, lest our virtue rest on such slight foundations. Supernatural advantages therefore must be pondered, for example, if I observe this doctrine, I shall avoid many sins and defects, I shall escape stings and troubles of conscience, and I shall not contract so heavy penalties to be hereafter expiated in purgatory ; I shall have peace of conscience, I shall perform many acts of virtue, for each of which I shall increase in grace with God, and in merits for the life to come, so that I may become rich before the Lord ; I shall also draw down the blessings of God on my duties, I shall become a fit instrument of the divine glory, &c. Here he may think of the innumerable true, solid, supernatural advantages which are usually contained in every practical conclusion, and of which each one may insist the more on those by which he feels him-

self more moved. These two general motives are always to be retained. *What spiritual evils shall I avoid? what goods shall I attain, for myself and others?* For as the Scripture saith: Who loveth iniquity hateth his own soul.* The soul of him that feareth the Lord is blessed, and all that he doeth shall prosper.† (Eccl. xxxiv. 17.)

Pleasing.

Pleasing, that is, How much shall I rejoice if I shall observe this doctrine? For that life is by no means sad which is based in conformity to the Divine will; nay, if there be in this valley of tears any portion of true joy, it is surely in that soul which earnestly converses with God. "O Israel, hadst thou hearkened to my commandments, thy peace had been as a river and thy justice as the waves of the sea."‡ But of the impious, "Destruction and unhap-

* Qui diligit iniquitatem odit animam suam.

† Timentis vero Dominum beata est anima ejus . . . et omnia quaecumque faciet, prosperabuntur.

‡ Israel si attendisses mandata mea, facta fuisset sicut flumen pax tua et jucunditas tua sicut gurgites maris.—Is. xlviii. 18.

piness in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known.”*

These and the like, attested too by the experience of all the saints, may be proposed to himself by each one as solid motives for seeking virtue and perfection.

Easy.

Easy. Since our Lord Jesus saith, that his yoke is sweet and his burden light, and promises universally, rest of soul to them that take his yoke upon their shoulders : this is surely true ; and I shall feel it to be true, if I take the Lord’s yoke entirely upon me, to wit, by endeavoring to observe as exactly as possible, His whole Evangelical law, for this is to take the yoke upon one’s self,* and place it, as it were, on one’s shoulders. But he who intends to keep some only, and not all,—such a man wishing to bear

* *Contritio et infelicitas in viis eorum et viam pacis non cognoverunt.*—Ps. xiii. 8.

† *Tollite jugum meum super vos et discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.* “Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.” These are the conditions. *Et invenietis requiem animabus vestris, jugum enim meum suave est et onus meum leve.* “And you shall find rest for your souls, for my yoke is sweet and my burden light.” This is the promise.

the Lord's yoke, as it were, with one hand shall be borne down and find it no light burden. If any one, therefore, finds this yoke of the Lord heavy, it can proceed from no other cause than that he does not take it all upon himself, and because he is not meek and humble of heart; for the Lord requires these two things, "And his commandments are not heavy."* "We have walked through hard ways, we have wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity."† Which is also in proportion, most true, as to religious who have not the spirit of their vocation, the spirit of humility, obedience, &c. It is much more heavy to foster pride in the heart, to retain obstinately one's self-will, &c., than to deny these very vices, by denying which we weaken and destroy those serpents that live in us, the causes of all sadness and interior pains, since on the first occasion of any adversity they bite and torment us. But what if the glory of heaven is taken into consideration—how easy should all things seem to us which shall obtain a reward to last for ever.

* *Mandata ejus gravia non sunt.*—1 John v. 3.

† *Ambulavimus nos difficiles, lassati sumus in via iniquitatis.*—Wisd. v. 7.

“Light is every burden I bear for the great good I hope for,” said the seraphic St. Francis.* These, and the like, we may propose to ourselves if it happen that the difficulties discourage us. Although to noble minds the very difficulty is rather a motive to undertake a thing with a good will. They rejoice to perform more difficult works, to bear greater troubles for Him who has done so much for them, who has suffered so much, and who is worthy of an infinite love, and for whom should they undergo a thousand most cruel deaths, they would justly consider that they had done little.

Necessary.

Necessary comprehends those weighty reasons for which absolutely I ought to believe this practical doctrine, even if it were not otherwise either useful or pleasing, even if, indeed, it should seem most difficult. That is to say, if I do not observe this doctrine I shall be unhappy, or at least expose myself to dreadful danger. For it is not indifferent to do, or not do, what I know must be done. To St. Paul it was necessary to be a zealous apostle, as he himself says : “Necessity lieth upon me,

* *Leve est mihi omne onus, quod fero propter magnum illud bonum quod spero.*

for wo is unto me if I preach not the gospel."*

In like manner I ought to say to myself, woe to me if I am not humble ; woe to me if I am not perfectly obedient, woe to me if I despise not the things of this world, woe to me if I am not mortified, woe to me if I do not in earnest press forward to perfection, &c. ; because these are the obligations of my state and my vocation, and if I do not endeavor to fulfil them, I shall not be saved, or at least shall certainly expose my soul to most dreadful danger. It is not left to my choice, if I wish to live a Jesuit, whether to be a good religious or not ; it is by no means true that I do well if I keep the rules and follow out my vocation ; but do no harm if I do not ; no, absolutely a necessity lieth upon me to do so ; otherwise I cannot be secure, and woe is me ! I shall do no favor to God if I serve him religiously and faithfully ; even then I shall be a useless servant, and do what I ought to do ; but I shall do him wrong if I do not serve him religiously and faithfully. This motive of necessity is most true and reasonable, even in those

* *Necessitas enim incumbit ; vae mihi si non evangelizavero.*—1 Cor. ix. 18.

things which seem to be only of greater perfection, if I know them and God impels me to them ; for even in these, unfaithfulness and disobedience to God may draw down upon me most grievous woes, especially that dreadful one ; that God may forsake and cut me off as unfaithful, and disobedient. This motive, moreover, though always a most potent one to determine our will, is especially to be made use of in things which appear to us more difficult, and when the mind grows torpid through sloth and a horror of the difficulties. Then above all it must be goaded and urged on by the following as spurs, proposing the punishments of God, the pains of purgatory, of hell ; God's threats against the tepid, whom he threatens to vomit out of his mouth, &c., also the terror of death, judgment, &c.

In this way therefore he must handle the question : *What motives led me to keep this practical doctrine ?* But this question must be treated accurately, that our virtue may not be as it were fortuitous or casual, depending on variable circumstances, but solid, founded on solid supernatural motives, well pondered by the understanding. I omit adding any examples here ; for what will appertain to this

is, I think, explained at sufficient length, so that they may be easily applied to various matters. Then follows the discussion of the question.

IV. HOW HAVE I OBSERVED THIS DOCTRINE HITHERTO ?

Examination of one's state,

A kind of examination is made in this place, and we ask of our conscience how we have hitherto acted with regard to the truth we meditate ; that if we have hitherto acted up to it, we may give thanks to God ; but if not, let us be inwardly confounded, and blush and look to ourselves for the time to come.

N. B.—But we must not be ready to believe that we have observed the doctrine well, though it seem so to us ; for herein our self-love and scanty self-knowledge are at times wont to deceive us, so that we seem to ourselves to have already obtained a virtue ; for such a thought is very pleasing. This happens especially to beginners who, as soon as they think they have some light concerning a practical doctrine, and have seen clearly the reason and motives, believe while no occasion offers of exercising that virtue, that they have already acquired it, although they are very far

from it, a fact which they afterwards not unfrequently learn to their sorrow by experience.

Aim of Self-confusion.

We must, therefore, aim here at our own humiliation and confusion, condemning ourselves because we have not observed that doctrine, or if we have, that we did it very imperfectly, and not in such a way as divine graces required of us.

By descending to particulars.

Here, too, he must descend to particular cases and occasions by which chiefly the habit of our virtues or vices is known. For if any one asks himself, generally, *Have I despised the world, or at least do I now despise it?* perhaps at the moment it will appear easy for him to answer *I do*. But let him ask particularly, how he feels when laughed at, humbled, despised, uncivilly treated by another, when admonished or reprehended for his faults? He will, perhaps, form a far different judgment of himself, and be compelled to confess that he has been so far really vain and worldly, and therefore no despiser of the world. And, perhaps, he shall think the same when, on the other hand, he asks, how he has conducted himself in success; how he

felt when praised, when signs of esteem are shown him? &c. He surely does not despise the world as yet, if he still rejoices, and if pleased with himself on such occasions. It is clear we must reason in the same manner as to sensuality and the conveniences of the body—as to wealth and temporal goods—in fine, as to all virtues and vices. If we examine ourselves merely in general, as to these, and as it were speculatively, we easily appear to ourselves to have overcome vices or attained virtues : but when we indeed descend to particulars, we perceive ourselves far from both these goods. The fruit, therefore, to be chiefly sought in this question is, that from a true knowledge of ourselves, we sincerely and with all possible confusion humble ourselves before God, reprehending and condemning ourselves.

V. WHAT MUST I DO FOR THE FUTURE ?

What for the future ?

Here the understanding must look to the future and seek good purposes, to be then embraced by the will. Here, too, he must descend to particular cases, especially those which seem to present greater difficulty, and those which occur more frequently, and above all, those which occur this very

day, or which certainly may occur; that we may in earnest examine with ourselves, how we ought to demean ourselves in them so as to act up to the known truth. Nor will it be amiss to propose anew the motives first considered that the will may more readily offer itself for a noble victory. There is no necessity of my giving an example here, as all this ought to be clear enough from what is said above.

VI. WHAT IMPEDIMENT IS TO BE REMOVED?
WHAT MEANS TO BE CHOSEN?

Impediments and Remedies.

That is what has hitherto hindered me from observing this doctrine? What will aid me to keep it henceforth better? It is not easy to lay down anything generally here, since these impediments and means may vary according to the various matters on which a person meditates, and still more according to the various temperaments and dispositions of persons meditating. It will be each one's business, therefore, to scrutinize the occasions wherein he is wont to commit the faults or sins about which he meditates, then to inquire diligently of himself: whence now does this come? what impels me to commit them? Moreover, let him beware of as-

cribing all to occasions. In sudden and in deliberate sins, occasions are chiefly to be foreseen and shunned; and therefore we are advised that our purposes of avoiding in deliberate sins and such as we usually commit unawares, be directed chiefly to avoiding occasions. But in other sins which arise from our passions (except sins of the flesh which are to be avoided by flights) there is required not so much the flying from occasions, as watchfulness, and a noble victory over ourselves: for example, the man given to anger must not imagine this or that occasion an impediment to him in observing gentleness, or this or that person who is a source of vexation to him, but he is his own cause, he bears that passion in himself, in his mind; this he ought to mortify, not fly occasions.

General Impediments and Remedies.

But the general impediments are especially these three—pride, sensuality, dissipation of mind. Opposed to these are three general means—humility, self-conquest or mortification, recollectedness of mind; to which, as an appendix, may be added, the remembrance of God's presence, the use of ejaculatory acts, and likewise the frequent calling to mind of the motives

which we have seen in meditation ; also to fortify the soul with special care against those occasions in which we find that we often fall, &c. All which things, however, may be referred to one of these three general means.

This is enough to say of impediments and means in general. It will be the duty of each one meditating, to consider himself attentively, and invoking the light of heaven to see what impediment in particular he has ; what remedy may be applied ? He will know these things if he has a true desire of advancing ; the grace of God will enlighten him, his superiors and confessor will give counsel ; even sound reason enlightened by faith, will teach him.

By these questions, therefore, which we have set forth, the understanding must be exercised ; if it be seriously applied to them, it is scarcely possible that solid matter can be wanting. And when he has thus reasoned concerning any one truth drawn from the matter of meditation, he shall pass to another, and when this is in like manner gone through, to a third and so on ; everywhere employing all, or certainly some of these questions.

Now of the exercise of the will.

III. HOW THE WILL IS TO BE APPLIED.

Office of the will two-fold.

The operation of the will in meditation, may be divided into two parts ; that is to say, the will ought to excite pious affections and to form good resolutions or purposes. And these two are so essential to meditation, that without them meditation will not be mental prayer, as it ought be, but a mere speculation or study.

1. AFFECTIONS.

Affections to be excited. When? Through the whole meditation.

What the will therefore ought to do, first, is to excite pious affections or certain inward emotions, to exercise interior acts of various virtues. These affections ought to be scattered through the whole meditation, they certainly ought to be as frequent as possible, since by these principally, meditation becomes a true prayer. For the fire of grace and divine love which should necessarily be always burning in our hearts, or at least existing there, ought to burst forth in flames during meditation, obtaining as it were fuel of all kinds, by means of various considerations, according to the nature of the fuel offered. In

my * meditation a fire shall flame out. Something wonderful, as indeed all the works of God are, occurs to us while considering the matter to be meditated, the will breaks forth into an affection (or sentiment) of admiration ; if a divine benefit occurs, it will be a sentiment of praise, thanksgiving, love ; if an effect of the wrath or threatening of God occurs to us, a sentiment of fear will burst forth, and so various others according to the matter. The meditator thinks over his miseries, it cannot be but that sentiments of humiliation, self-confusion, grief, entreaty, &c., arise.

How? Not so much by the lips as by the heart.

If now a method for exciting these affections is sought, let each one before all else convince himself, that well turned phrases are not needed here. Affections come not from the tongue, but from the heart ; nor are we obliged to treat with God as with men who do not know the feelings of our hearts, unless we express them by words. “ *When you are praying,*”

* In meditatione mea exardescet ignis.—Ps. xxxviii. 4.

says the Lord Jesus, "*Speak not much as the heathens. For they think that in their much speaking they may be heard.*"* This admonition of the Lord Jesus appears to apply especially to mental prayer. For there are some who think that the affections cannot be good, unless uttered in terms beautifully and eloquently arranged as if indeed it were necessary to incline God as we do men, to favor us by dint of words; this surely is a most grievous error. "*This affair,*" says St. Augustine, "*is conducted better by groans than by words.*"† And if frequent mention is made in the psalms, and the rest of Scripture, of cries to God, we are to understand not the cries from the mouth, but rather the cry of the heart in more ardent affections. But on this point F. Rodriguez descants at large in his usual lucid style (Pt. 1. T. 5. c. 12). Let it suffice to give this advice here, that we are not to be solicitous, in what words we must express our sentiments, since they may be most excellently expressed

* *Nolite multum loqui sicut ethnici; putant enim quod in multiloquio suo exaudiantur.*—Matt. vi. 7.

† *Hoc negotium plus gemitibus quam sermonibus peragitur.*

even by the heart alone, without using any words.

Some words assist,

I confess indeed that the affection of the heart is usually much aided by employing some words in which that sentiment is expressed ; but there is no need of these words being either exquisite or many ; nay, rather it seems to me, that these words should be simple, brief, but frequently repeated, more frequently revolved in the mind. If any words occur to express this sentiment, taken either from Holy writ or the prayers which the church uses, or which we know to have been used by any saint, they certainly would be the best, since they have a peculiar unction, and must necessarily be more pleasing to God—It may perhaps be not out of place to give an example here. Therefore,

Example.

At the contemplation of the benefits of God, sentiments of gratitude are to be excited. What is more simple than to say with the Psalmist, “ *Oh what shall I render to the Lord, for all that he hath rendered to me*”! * Now if meanwhile you

* Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi ?

revolve in mind who you are, and who God is, that confers such benefits on you—

What . . . shall I render to the Lord . . . so great a Lord . . . for all that he hath rendered to me, and revolve the greatness of his beneficence and his benefits, it will be easy to nourish this same affection longer, by repeating exactly the same words attentively and sedately.—*What shall I render to the Lord, for all that he hath rendered to me?* For this same sentiment of gratitude will serve well, these words of the patriarch Jacob, which contain a most beautiful act of thanksgiving. “*I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies.*” For they contain a most profound acknowledgment of our own vileness, whereby man is unworthy even of being looked upon by so great a God; and acknowledgment of the impotence in which we are of rendering due thanks to God, for even his slightest mercies. “*I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies.*” Thus various other words may be used; and if no other come to mind say, *Oh! my God! I thank thee!* But say it from the heart, and it will be a good sentiment of gratitude. God regards not the words, but the heart.

2nd Example. •

In like manner at the consideration of our own vileness, a sentiment of humility is to be excited ; what is more simple than to say : “ *O truly am I in every point of view, most unworthy of thy divine sight, O Lord,*”* what more easy than to revolve these words ; *I in every point of view* to think over the causes whereby since such you are, you are truly *most unworthy of God’s sight*, and in this manner nourish longer still the sentiment of humility. For this same sentiment of humility may also serve these words, also after the mind of our holy father, St. Ignatius.

What am I but a sack of dung and the food of worms as to the body, but as to the soul a most foul sore and ulcer whence such putridness of sins has flowed, and still flows unceasingly† and upon which filth the eyes of God are compelled to be ever gazing.

Or from the Apocalypse : “ *Oh truly*

* O vere ego undecumque divino conspectu tuo Domine indignissimus.

† Quid sum nisi saccus stercorum et esca vermium ; fœdissimum ulcus et apostema, unde tanta sanies peccatorum profluxet, et adhuc profluere non cessat.

am I wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked."* Or even if he should say nothing else, but "O how vile and abominable I am," you have a sentiment of humility. Be not anxious as to words, only revolve this thought in the heart.

A Useful Practice.

With little trouble, very many short sentences may be collected either from the scriptures or from the prayers used in the church, or the sayings of the saints, suited to the various sentiments. Nay, each one can collect for himself such affectuous sentences, and make them familiar by frequently ruminating them in prayers whenever any affection is to be excited which may be expressed by such sentence. And it is undoubtedly better that each one should collect such for himself than take those collected by others ; because all do not equally move all, and some find greater affection and taste in some, and others in others. They who say their vocal prayers with attention, and perform their spiritual reading attentively, will find it most easy to collect such sentences for the various sentiments which they will revolve in due

* O vere ego miser et miserabilis et pauper et cæcus et nudus.

time in meditation. But they must be short sentences, their force well weighed, and they must be rendered familiar. This practice is confirmed by the example of many saints.

Sentiments to be nourished.

In this place, we must not omit an observation, entirely to the mind of our holy father Ignatius; that if we feel any sentiment excited in us, we must nourish the same longer without any anxiety to pass to others, which are still to be treated in the same meditation; but let us go on in the same sentiment until we are satisfied—for instance, in the sentiment of humility and the acknowledgment of your vileness; revolve this thought, “Truly I am in every point of view most unworthy of God’s sight,” or any other sentence to the point, revolve it in the mind as long as with any interior sense or spiritual relish, your vileness remains before your eyes, and this affection is still warm: this would be an excellent meditation even if you should do nothing else the whole hour of meditation. When you feel that sentiment grow cool, pass to the further consideration of the matter to be meditated on. Nevertheless, as to those sentiments that do not tend so

much to humility and self-abasement, for instance in sentiments of joy, confidence, &c. ; although they may be holy, nevertheless as they are more subject to illusion, if one happens to dwell too long or even spend the whole hour of meditation in them, and this frequently : this point should, for greater security, be made known to the spiritual Father.

Even in the application of the memory there is room for Sentiment.

The affections then ought, as we said, to be scattered through the whole meditation ; and this is to be understood as well of the application of the memory as of the understanding ; for they may be in place everywhere, nay that naturally as it were some sentiments ought to arise, everyone will easily feel if he attentively consider what has been said above, successively, on the application of each power. From the very outset affections at least of faith, may be elicited, and indeed ought to be, as we noted in that place, for instance, saying with the deepest feeling—*I believe because faith teaches—or, I believe because thou, O eternal truth, hast said it—or, I believe, because thou, O Lord, hast said it, who art not like man, a liar. Heaven and*

*earth shall pass away, but thy words shall not pass away.** The last method, as is clear, is especially useful, when words of our Lord Jesus are to be meditated, or other words of God taken from the Scriptures.

2. PURPOSES.

Purposes to be formed.

Another part, the will ought in meditation to discharge, is, to form good purposes for the future. This is so essential to meditation, especially in our society, the life of which is active, that meditation without the formation of good purposes, cannot satisfy its end. For its end, especially in the Society, is not only to devote an hour to God in prayer, but by meditating to cleanse the mind from vices, to adorn it with virtues, to amend and perfect the whole life, to confirm one's-self in the divine service, to strengthen one's-self against difficulties and temptations, to dispose one's actions in due order so as to discharge them perfectly, &c.; all which is done in meditation, in no other way

* Credo, quia docet fides—Credo, quia tu, o æterna veritas, dixisti—Credo, quia tu dixisti Domine, quia non es quasi homo, ut mentiaris.—Coelum et terra transibunt; verba autem tua non transibunt.

than by purposes well made. But as this, even from what we have now said, is evidently of the greatest moment, it is necessary to lay down some propositions on this matter as accurately, as the Divine goodness enables us to do.

Especially after any practical consideration.

1st.—It is sufficiently clear that purposes may be made everywhere in meditation: that is to say, at the close of the consideration of any practical doctrine drawn from the matter of meditation, as was said above, speaking of the application of the understanding. For among the questions which the meditator ought to put to himself, is also that, “*What shall I do for the future?*” The answer to this question will contain the purposes to be made. And to the same end tend also the following questions, “*What impediment is to be removed? what means to be employed?*” Where the will resolves to do, what the understanding upon these questions has learned ought to be done, this very resolution is the purpose. This, however, does not prevent a purpose being conceived incidentally whenever, in course of meditation, anything presents itself as right to be done or avoided. But the pro-

per place for purposes which are sought as the solid fruit of meditation is surely, as we said, at the end of the questions which the meditator ought to put to himself, in the application of the understanding. Now as was said in due place, these questions are made in each point, and if more practical conclusions are contained in the first point, more questions are made, and then also purposes as to each practical consideration. The matter will be perfectly clear to every one from the examples there given.

2d. *They must be practical.*

But the purposes must be practical, really efficacious, for amendment of life and for perfection. I wish this particularly to be understood in this place, lest the purposes be made only on exercising some petty devotion; as if for a meditation on death he should conceive no other resolution than for example, "I will say a Pater and an Ave every day for the agonizing, and for obtaining my happy death will make such or such a prayer to the Blessed Virgin." Such purposes indeed are good, but are insufficient alone. To render the purposes truly and solidly practical, lay before yourself what you have chiefly to avoid,

what sin, what defect to amend, and in like manner what virtue chiefly to keep, in order to dispose yourself for a happy death; what passion moreover to mortify, and how. Such purposes are called practical.

Particular.

They must not be universal, but *particular*. Observe what was said above at the 2d question. *What practical conclusion is to be drawn from this?* and the 4th, *How have I hitherto observed this doctrine?* What is there laid down, is exactly in point here. Touching the two cases, we may here add, that particular resolutions may be made chiefly in two ways. 1st. If they apply to particular cases; 2d. If something particular is resolved to be done in all cases. I will set the matter forth by examples.

You take the resolution: *I shall be patient in all adversity*. This resolution is universal, and so of no utility unless perhaps for very spiritual and perfect men. Make then out of the general purpose a particular one; this can be done in two ways. 1st. If you say: *I will be patient on such or such occasions*; expressing those occasions in which you know yourself to be more frequently moved to impatience.

2d. If you say thus: "*If any thing contrary befall me, I will think this is little compared to hell which I have deserved,*" Or, "*I will bear this freely for the love of JESUS crucified.*" In either way the purpose will be particular, and so far good: it will be better if you render it particular in both ways, for example: "*I will be patient in such or such circumstances; thinking how little this is to hell, which I have deserved, &c.*" For thus, in the resolution itself, you have the means of observing it.

4th. *Suited to our Actual State.*

The resolutions must be suited to the person's actual state. See what is said of the 5th question: *What must I do for the future?* To which, in this place, may be added, that our resolutions must not extend to any time still far distant; as if a young novice or scholastic should make the resolution, "When I am a priest I shall do so and so." For such resolutions are generally useless, and in no small degree liable to illusion. The resolution, therefore, must relate to the present, or at least to very speedy wants.

5th. *Even for the present day.*

Nay, something must be resolved on to be done this very day as to amendment of

life or greater perfection. This can be easily done by those who scrutinize their conscience well in their examens, and who seriously desire to correct the defects which they themselves observe, or of which the Superior has admonished them. What any one who has truly at heart, of itself occurs to him, and every meditation, whatever be the subject, serves him to amend it. For whether he meditates on the love of God or his threats against sinners; whether on the passion of Christ or his glorious mysteries, the practical conclusion will always lead him to make war on his own vice. But this must especially be done when we are hard pressed by any vice, or when any difficulty retards us more in God's service: for then, as it were, all the engines, all the instruments of war, so to speak, must be turned on that as their aim, so that we may come off victorious. Hence, also, it is clear enough that the meditation ought frequently to coincide with the matter of the particular examen; and that the particular examen ought to be greatly aided by meditation.

Founded on solid motives.

6th.—The resolutions must be well founded, strongly supported by solid motives.

Such they will undoubtedly be, if the third, "*What motives lead to keep this conclusion?*" be properly handled.—See what was said above at this question.—We often fall into error here, for as soon as we see what we ought to do, we immediately resolve to do it; this promptness of the will is indeed praiseworthy: but such resolutions are often like a house without a foundation, built upon sand, and the slightest wind of temptation or difficulty levels them to the ground. Now that the resolutions may be solid, solid foundations must be laid for them, based upon eternal truths, so as to convince the understanding to the fullest extent, as to the necessity, utility, equity, &c. of doing or avoiding the point in question. Such motives are to be considered, not merely once or a few times, as if persuading one's-self of motives it already sufficiently knows, why it is necessary to act thus, but to resolve this same often in the meditation, especially concerning that thing on which we mainly labor, either in crushing our pride, or any other vices which attack us more, or acquiring humility or any other virtue, we stand in greater need of. By frequent meditation of the same motives, they sink deep into the heart, and if then frequent

acts follow this, the habit of the virtue is acquired.

Most humble,

7th.—The resolutions must be most humble, full of diffidence in self. Want of humility in resolutions is the primary cause why they are not kept, especially by those who take resolutions in earnest, and have a real desire of serving God. They firmly resolve in meditation, that they will act so and so, on such and such occasions; and while they thus resolve, especially in view of the motives for so doing, they think, from a kind of concealed presumption, that they shall now certainly do so; nay it seems impossible for them to act otherwise, and yet they for the most part fail, as soon as an occasion offers. The reason is not that the resolutions were not sincere, but because as they were not humble, with distrust in themselves, and in strength, God indeed both justly and mercifully humbles their pride. When taking resolutions therefore, we must on the one hand fear our own inconstancy and weakness, and on the other put all our trust in grace and the divine aid, which we must most humbly implore, employing too and invoking the intercession of the B. V. Mary,

our Patron Saints, Holy Angel Guardian, &c. Saying for example,

With suppliant prayer for aid.

This indeed I now resolve to do, Oh my God so I wish to do but yet, Lord, I shall do none of these things, if thou help me not . . . I know too well, I have already too often experienced my own perversity and weakness to be able to rely on my resolutions. In thee, O Lord, I have hoped. I shall never be confounded.* Assist me by thy grace, when an opportunity of keeping thy resolution offers—then, O Lord! recal to my mind this truth which I now see clearly by thy grace,—then confirm this my will. What will it serve me, Lord, that thou hast illumined me with this light of thine to know what I ought to do, if I shall not have followed it. O help me, therefore, Lord, for thy holy name's-sake, through the merits of Jesus Christ, by his blood, by his most sacred heart, I implore thee—Stand by me, O my Patron Saints. Especially thou, O most holy Virgin Mother of God, and my mother too, who hast already enriched me with so many of thy mercies . . . aid

* In te Domine speravi, non confundar in æternum.

me obtain for me . . . O my holy guardian Angel, speak to my heart when this occasion comes, and help me, &c." Besides we learn to keep more accurately this very important advice, the more frequently we experience our weakness and inconstancy in good purposes.

But if the will is averse to good resolutions, it must be compelled by fighting, doing violence, insisting on the motives, especially that of necessity, as was said above at the third question, "*What motives,*" &c., and he must pray God with greater fervor, to raise up his mind prostrated on the ground.

§ III. OF THE END OR EGRESS.

Egress is made

Meditation is usually ended by saying a *Pater* and an *Ave*. But we do not treat here of this egress merely. This extreme must be preceded by something concluding the meditation.

by a Recapitulation,

It is very advisable that if many resolutions have been, as is usually the case, formed in the course of meditation, they should all be collected together and renewed at the end. For although this is to

be done afterwards in the review, nevertheless it helps much to make it by prayer at this place before the end of the meditation. Thence this fruit, besides others, will be obtained, that the last moment of the meditation will be more ardent; since on the contrary, it not unfrequently happens that the close where we ought to have most fervor, is wretchedly cold. Certainly, when matter fails us at the close of meditation, then at least, I say, we must use this kind of recapitulation of the whole meditation and all our resolutions.

and Colloquies.

At least before the *Pater* and *Ave* ought to come the prayer which our holy Father calls *Colloquy*, directed to God or to Jesus Christ, or the Blessed Virgin, or some other saint, as the matter of meditation suggests.

In this Colloquy. 1st. Observe, as was said above of sentiments, that we speak not of words but of the feelings of the heart. Be not solicitous in what manner or what words you frame your colloquy. Let the heart, let the affections speak. 2d. In this colloquy, must be sought grace to keep in due time the resolutions made (you have an example in paragraph 7 on purposes,

that they be humble). It must embrace all the resolutions made in the course of the meditation, even if all be not enumerated. 3d. In this colloquy another petition also may be added; for example, for some present necessity, either our own or commended to our prayers by the Superiors, or for any other for whom we intend to pray.

4th. Instead of the usual *Pater* and *Ave*, another vocal prayer may be said at the close of the meditation, for this seems entirely according to the view of our holy father St. Ignatius. And frequently indeed, the *Anima Christi* is inserted between the *Pater* and *Ave*, which certainly should be done, when any of the mysteries of our Lord Jesus are meditated. If the meditation be on the Holy Ghost, it would be well to conclude by the *Veni Creator* or *Veni Sancte Spiritus*. If on the benefits of God, by the *Te Deum laudamus*. If on any Saint, by a prayer in honor of that saint, or to that saint, if any is at hand. Nevertheless, the *Pater* and *Ave* ought commonly to be habitually added.

5th. This last vocal prayer, if made up of several, may be aptly interrupted by colloquies. Our holy Father shows the plan more than once in the *Pater*, *Anima Christi*, and *Ave*. 1st. The Blessed Virgin

is entreated to implore for us the grace we seek, from Our Lord Jesus Christ, then a *Holy Mary* is said.—2nd. The clemency of Our Lord Jesus Christ is implored that, as our supreme mediator, he beg the same grace for us of his Father, and give it himself, since “all power is given to him in heaven and on earth.” And the *Anima Christi* is added,—3rd. We entreat the Eternal Father by Jesus Christ and by himself to grant us that grace; the *Our Father* is said, and so the meditation ends. Finally the meditator rises reverently from his communings with Our Lord, remaining in his sight. All wandering of thought is most to be avoided immediately after the end of meditation. If he has to go out immediately, very great care must be taken of modesty, unless he is willing to lose in a moment the fruit gathered in a whole hour. Let us now pass to the review, of which a few words remain to be said.

CHAPTER III.

OF WHAT IS TO BE OBSERVED AFTER MEDITATION.

Review.

The meditation is usually followed by an examination according to the prescription of our holy Father Ignatius, or as we generally call it a *review*. Concerning which this is to be first noted, that it is not only most useful but absolutely most necessary, as well for learning the art of meditation, as for gathering fruit from the meditation made.

Necessary.

A man sometimes lives long in the Religious state, makes a meditation daily, and nevertheless is still ignorant of the art of meditating; because the review is either entirely omitted or badly made. A meditation is also daily made, eternal truths are considered, and by their light resolutions of a better life are conceived; and yet the same passions are always alive in his soul, they remain fast in the same vices and defects; and this often has its origin in a great measure in the neglect of a review.

We must know that nothing of what our holy Father prescribes for meditating with fruit is superfluous, all are as intimately connected together as the links of a chain; if one of them be taken away or broken, the chain becomes either entirely unfit for use, or certainly less fit. But still less can we, to whom as sons of the Society, our holy Father's precepts come not only with the force of instruction but even of strict obligation, expect the aid of divine grace, in this art of the saints, if we are herein wanting to our duty—to our duty, I say, because imposed by the authority of our holy Father, and the plan of our institute and the religious usage, in a word obedience itself.

Never to be omitted.

Let it therefore be a principle of ours, deeply imprinted on the mind, from the very outset of our religious life, that the review after meditation must not be omitted, but even if perchance we should be prevented immediately after meditation, it must, although later, still always be done entirely, omitting rather other prayers and devotions, which perhaps each one has adopted according to his taste, laudable indeed but less necessary than review.

It consists of two parts.

This review, although it seems ordained by our holy Father, for the mere examination of the meditation just concluded, nevertheless this very examination cannot, it seems, be possibly made without some recapitulation; wherefore this review is usually divided into two parts, namely the examination properly so called, and the repetition or recapitulation of the meditation.

1st EXAMINATION.

1st. *Examen*

When therefore the meditation is ended, we must examine how it has succeeded. Here belongs an inquiry how one acted in the preparation, as well as in the meditation itself.

As to the preparation; for example, whether the points were attentively read or heard, the preceding evening? Whether recollectedness of mind was then preserved?

as to Preparation,

Whether the subject of meditation was recalled to mind, after going to bed before sleep? Whether the same subject was first called up in the morning, excluding all other thoughts? Whether sentiments

suited to this subject were excited, as well while washing as while walking, for instance, to the chapel or elsewhere? Whether tranquillity of mind was preserved, especially just before meditation? Whether the points, if not read over, were at least recalled to mind? Whether he stood for a little while before entering on the meditation to think what he was about to do with the remembrance of the presence of God. So far for the preparation.

as to the Meditation itself and its ingress,

Concerning the meditation itself, the ingress, progress and egress to be examined.

1st. Ingress. For example, with what reverence, attention, and devotion, the preparatory prayer was made? Whether the preludes were observed, especially the second asking light and special grace, according to the subject of meditation?

progress.

2nd. Progress; for example, whether the faculties of the mind were well applied? The memory attentively pondering on the subject? The understanding, reasoning by the questions, *What is here to be considered? What practical doctrine, &c.?* Whether the motives necessary, useful,

becoming, &c., were well weighed? The will—whether sentiments were excited in the course of the meditation? Whether purposes of a better and more perfect life were seriously formed? Whether an humble prayer for aid was added, &c. In all, whether the distractions were overcome or, at least, not consented to! Whether the feeling of tediousness which perhaps came on was shaken off or at least desisted? Whether, on account of it, no stop was made in applying the mind, as well as possible? Whether recourse was had to the first prelude, if there was any, to fix the wandering imagination, and fasten it upon the matter proposed? Whether the mind was applied seriously in all and every point, &c.

Egress.

3rd. *Egress*; for example, whether the colloquy was made fervently with a prayer for grace? Whether the torpor which occasionally comes upon one in the end of meditation, was shaken off? Whether the meditation was reverently concluded? In a word, whether from first to last he did all in his power to correspond to divine grace? Whether the mind was seriously applied? Whether a becoming posture of body was retained? Outward and in-

ward reverence? Whether the meditation was not unnecessarily interrupted, or broken off? Or if there was such a necessity, whether at least the quiet and collectedness of mind was preserved, &c. Nor is there any reason why any one should be alarmed at this host of questions for examination; they may be even much increased, only let him learn how to meditate, he will soon without difficulty see wherein he fails, his own conscience will inform and accuse him. By going through the parts of meditation as we have said, preparation, ingress, progress, egress, it can hardly be, that any of the faults he has committed, can escape him.

If the meditation fail. Why?

“If the meditation turn out badly, says Our holy Father: I shall with sorrow inquire the causes, with a resolution to do better.” The causes are easily judged from what we have just said. Still should no cause of the want of success be found here, let the meditator think of the remote preparation, of the sobriety of his mind during the day, of his observance of the rules, of his cleanness of heart, of his desire of mortification, &c. For certain it is, that God often punishes in prayer, our

defects committed out of prayer, as on the other hand, he often most bountifully rewards in prayer, our fervor in other things pertaining to his service. If the person find no cause for the want of success, let him nevertheless humble himself when thinking that the cause is hidden from his eyes, but let him humble himself with a will so resigned to the will of God, as not to become on that account too anxious. But these words of our holy Father are to be well observed, "I shall inquire the causes with grief, and a purpose of amendment." This, in sooth, is the primary end of the review, to learn to meditate, and to become used to meditate well. If we daily perform what our holy Father here prescribes, we shall easily by the help of God's grace acquire this art. "If the meditation," our holy Father further adds, "has succeeded, I shall give thanks to God, and observe the same method for the future," that is to say, I shall always go through my meditation in the same order, and with the same application of mind.

2nd. Recapitulation.

This recapitulation is the second thing to be done in the review, after the examen of the meditation, or rather with and in

the examen. That is to say, the whole series of the late meditation is repassed in the mind, what was proposed in the 1st, what in the 2nd, what in the 3rd point. And while the defects committed are sought in this order, may come to mind of themselves, at the same time are recalled what practical conclusions were drawn from each point: by what motives they were supported; with what sentiments received into the mind, what resolutions were conceived. So if he has had any more clear illustration, if he has seen any truth more clearly than usual, if any truth, any saying, any motive has struck the mind more forcibly, let him recal, retaste, and ruminate these things, and set them before him to be often again recalled, retasted, and ruminated; let him confirm the purposes made in the course of the meditation, and resolve on their execution in due time, again foreseeing, if possible, the occasions. Finally, let him briefly implore the aid of God, to execute faithfully his resolutions.

Due time to be given to review.

All this, moreover, although it does not commonly require the whole quarter (for our holy father says, "for about a quarter of an hour") requires, however, some time to

be given to do it well ; at least half a quarter or ten minutes. Two or three minutes certainly do not suffice. But the immense usefulness of this review, tested by their own experience, will prompt those who are truly desirous of spiritual advancement and perfection, to do it accurately. To them review will be as it were a gathering in of the fruit, which meditation has produced, and which but for this review would perish in vain. Besides it not unfrequently happens that they find in the review, that taste of devotion which they sought in vain in the meditation itself ; and if dry in meditation and without good desires or resolutions, either with or without their own fault, the review will by God's grace supply all, and they can there form good purposes, no less efficacious than if made in meditation itself. But in all this matter, more is given to trial than to speaking or writing. The goodness of God is incredible and surpasses all understanding, bestowing its graces on them that apply some care, that they may take courage to bestow, each day, greater care, and in turn be covered more liberally with greater graces by the Lord.

A supererogatory act.

To the review may also be added a device, used by many with great fruit for the execution of this resolution; that is to say, they choose some ejaculatory prayer, adapted to the subject of meditation, and their own resolutions, by repeating which frequently during the day, they both recal the meditation to mind, and conveniently remember the resolutions taken. And if, as was said in its proper place, the fruit of meditation is brought to the subject of the particular examen, it is clear what a spiritual gain will result from this. We often break our resolutions, because the truths by the light of which we had conceived them, are obscured or vanish from our mind. This then will be a means of preserving this light in the soul. Nor indeed were the saints Saints by any other way than that; having the lights of eternal truths ever present in their minds, they could always, by the help of God's grace, be excited by them to order their life in all things by these truths.

Not only purposes, but lights, to be noted in writing.

Finally he must not neglect the advice, which is usually given by all and is familiar

to all who aim at perfection, namely that some things from meditation should be noted in writing, afterwards to be now and then read over again. Moreover both *lights* and *purposes* are to be noted. If the resolutions alone be noted, without adding some of the motives from which they were conceived, they will generally lack all force to induce their observance. Therefore, in the first place must be noted the *lights*, that is those well discovered truths, those illustrations, those good thoughts, those motives which impel the mind to form such purposes. For these when afterwards in due time read together with the purposes, will more effectually stir one up to observe them faithfully. For the most part, however, all this should be noted clearly and briefly, and not in many words. Nor are all *purposes* to be noted, but those of greater moment, or such as he will not meet occasions of so daily. For as to what regards our daily actions or daily defects, that is much better retained by a prompt execution, and daily practice at once than by written notes. But the noting down of lights and resolutions, is most of all to be made in the time of retreats; since in them, not merely the actions of this day or that are disposed, but a whole plan of

life is drawn up for the whole year, and in some respects for the whole life. But it must suffice to touch on this by the way.

Conclusion.

Nothing now remains but to repeat that from which I started, that the art of meditating is part of the science of the Saints, and depends much less on human teaching than on the unction of the Holy Ghost, and the desire of a pious will—Even if a man should know perfectly all the rules here given, it will surely be of no avail unless, as is evident, they be put in practice with a true desire of advancing. Nor will this very desire of advancing and the observance of all these rules avail, unless the grace of the Holy Ghost be given. For it is not man's work but God's. Nevertheless he must not doubt but that God, infinitely good and merciful, will aid him willing; for this very pious will of advancing in spirit is a great gift of God. Let us, therefore, use exertions as much as we can with the grace of God, and at the same time frequently beg of God.* Lord, teach

* Domine doce me orare, doce me meditari; da donum orationis. Venient nobis omnia bona pariter cum illa et innumerabilis honestas per manus illius Infinitus enim thesaurus est

me to pray, teach me to meditate—Give me the gift of prayer—All good things will come to us together with it and innumerable riches through its hands. For it is an infinite treasure to man, which they that use, become the friends of God, being commended for the gift of discipline.

hominibus quo quia usi sunt participes facti sunt
amicitia Dei propter disciplinæ dona commendati.
Wisdom vii. 14.

FINIS.

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